A Research Proposal

on

A study on value creation through consumer engagement with social networking sites

Submitted to

LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN MANAGEMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

"For the last hundred years media has been pushed out to people, but now marketers are going to be a part of the conversation."

Mark Zuckerberg, Founder- Facebook

Social media is the sought after destination for marketers today, owing to the fact that internet has become a household phenomenon globally and has penetrated into each and every nook and corner of consumers life. This has led to the increased reliance of marketers on Internet as a customer service and marketing tool. To be more specific social media is ruling the roost in terms of its applicability to marketing success. The reason behind this can be attributed to the fact that- this is where more and more people can be found spending their time today, and this is where a lot of conversations are doing the rounds. Every latest update is up there on the social web even before it spreads on the traditional media and therefore, it is practically impossible to think of a comprehensive marketing strategy in the absence of social media and social networking. In fact, social media has already found a place in every marketers promotion mix today. Social media is almost six years old as on date and since its inception, the growth of social media and network websites has been rapid and changing the functionality of the Internet (Vogt & Knapman, 2008).

Till a couple of years ago, the Internet was a one way communication platform facilitating limited interactions through emails. However, with the entry of social media, there has been a sea change in the scenario. The social web is creating a space that enables every person with even the most limited understanding of basic computer functions to become a publisher. Waves of new social networking tools are made available to interested users who can now stay connected to share as much or as little as they want without accessing their emails.

Social media is commonly associated with social networks and can be described as a kind of online media which encourages every member for feedback and contribution. It is a social instrument of two way communication facilitating the sharing of information between users within

a defined network via web 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2005). It involves online activities in which the user contributes to content creation. This media encourages user involvement which can be as simple as posting comments or giving votes or as complex as recommending content to other user on the basis of preferences of people with similar interests and lifestyle. Thus social media can be described as a broad term inclusive of activities where people create content, share it, bookmark it and network at a phenomenal rate.

With so much to offer to users today, social media has become a sensation and users take pride in joining social network sites. Social network sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and LinkedIn are taking the lead in social networking space making social media the next big bet for marketers. In nutshell social media is one place where all the people are hooked thereby creating opportunities for building social networks. Social network utilizes social media technology to connect with people and build relationships both personally and professionally. Social networks allow individuals to construct their profile within a bounded system, share with other users and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Social networking sites function like a virtual community of web users. Users of social network sites can share common interests like any kind of hobby or politics. Anyone including teens and young adults, women, moms, affluent consumers, and older individuals can join a social network site. Once registered the person can begin to socialize and create his/her own network of friends with common interests or goals.

All said and done, social media is all about “making it easy for people to talk to each other by creating connections” (Social Media for business, 2009).

1.1. Need for a social media strategy

A social media strategy is imperative for every business aiming for success and growth. It is a well-known fact that a successful business is

one that has struck the chord with its customers – in terms of making interactions, contacts and connections easier. Social media addresses the need by providing ample opportunities for creating these connections, and hence it is important for marketers to tap this area. In fact, social media is one place where marketers can find all their customers, thereby making it the sensation of the present era. Hence if social media is managed successfully it can create a lot of goodwill and buzz for the company. This is the only reason why every company today, is running after the social web and crafting a social media strategy. This would enable marketers to encash from the connections because people are using social media for three main purposes: to learn about something new, to evaluate a decision and to connect and interact with others.

1.2 Social media advertising – *"Don't Sell, just help people buy"*

Marketers are busy in creating their presence on the virtual space and directing their efforts towards social media advertising as marketers wish to reap the benefits that social media has to offer in terms of a large customer base. With consumers moving away from traditional media the challenge for marketers is to look for a new and better medium to reach their target market. Social media advertising comes as a handy solution to serve the need of marketers. New technologies have changed the way that consumers view advertising (Rappaport, 2007). It is an ever known fact that brand should be present where the users are, so marketers are at the right place now. Online social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are goldmines of data with information self-disclosed by users on these sites. These sites contain every Information be it users preferences or details regarding birthdays, engagements and relationship status (Blakely, 2007). All this information offer marketers the opportunity to precisely and unswervingly target their potential consumers through this platform. Social media advertising gives opportunity to companies to get their potential client to discuss company's products, post comments and reviews and thereby promote their companies brand on a continuous

basis. Social media can help prospective buyers to learn about the organizations and also aid in their buying decision process.

1.3 Forms of social media advertising

- **Direct network advertising**- This is most commonly used and most effective form of social media advertising. This model is based on theory that people make decisions to purchase something or do something by getting influenced from their peers. An example of the same is Facebook Beacon Project (now discontinued) in which advertisements were published right into a user's news feed.
- **Direct advertisements-** This is also traditional yet effective way of web advertising which is inclusive of banner ads, newsletter subscription ads, corporate profiles with fans and logos, corporate profiles without fans or logos, get widgets, give widgets or sponsored content. A collaborative research done by Psychster Inc. and allrecipies.com suggested that banner ads are the most commonly used tool by advertisers that want to push a product (Psychster Inc., 2010).
- **Indirect advertising-** This is a relatively new technique of creating advertiser pages or groups on social network sites which users can choose to join. Initially the companies used this idea to increase brand awareness only but now the same has been used for marketing purpose also. For example to market a contest or market a new product etc. (Wikimedia Foundation Inc., 2011)

1.4 How to advertise effectively on social network

- **Understand the social media channel**- Advertisers can promote their products to their targeted audience through social media effectively by understanding who is using which social media site. Facebook users represent a greater number of females when compared to twitter users who are more males. This can help

companies to target gender specific products or services on the appropriate social network like for male products more advertisements on twitter will be beneficial (Ingram, 2010).

- **Targeting right user with right message**- ensuring that the right message reaches the right customer is also an essential prerequisite for advertising. This is possible through content targeting. If any user comments *'I am interested in buying a new small car'*, in order to get opinion of online friends. A company selling small cars, if can display the advertisements next to the comment, thereby making the right information available to the interested users can influence the person's decision.

- **Matching the present**- another important factor to be considered is that companies need to understand the fact that promotions which are done on social media sites should be current and relevant to the present i.e. the content should not be obsolete.

- **Be on social media**- There is old saying "the early bird gets the worm". The same is true with companies eying for social media advertising. It has become mandatory for the companies to have their social media pages. Today, companies like Nestle, Skittles, Starbucks, and Accenture have their own social media pages. In addition to this, incorporating social media advertisements with social media networking practices give better impression to the target users, thereby creating a favorable perception in their minds. These social media pages provide advantage of back links that drive more traffic to companies' main website. Companies use this social media platform to add articles, press releases, reviews, new product launch and announcements as the content. One thing of utmost importance for companies in social media space is the customization of social media page to meet the specific image of

the company. Social media page should act as the mirror of the personality of the company.

Social Media is less about distributing information and more about companies being able to connect with customers in ways that are both meaningful to those customers and to the goals of the business.

1.5 Word of mouth marketing and social media

Word-of-mouth marketing has a lot of influence on the psyche of a consumer. This deliberate influence on consumer-to-consumer communications using various professional techniques when used via social media is known as social media marketing, viral marketing and buzz marketing. According to a research by (Knight, 2009), marketers had spent more than $1.54 billion on Word-of-mouth marketing initiatives in 2008, and the figure is expected to rise to $3 billion by 2013. A study carried out on diffusion of innovation has suggested that conversations among buyers are more important than marketing communications in influencing adoption (Ryan & Gross, 1943). However, the easy accessibility and reach of internet today has empowered a marketer who is interested in influencing and monitoring WOM in a manner that was never done before. Advertising professionals have come to realize the crucial role of opinion givers and spreaders (Opinion leaders, Opinion Seekers, Opinion Takers), whose post purchase word of mouth can exercise a strong influence on information dissemination (Goldenberg, Barak, & Muller, 2001), consumer satisfaction and repurchase intentions (Davidow, 2003), product judgments (Herr, Frank, & John, 1991), and customers' lifetime value (Hogan, Katherine, & Barak, 2004). Word of mouth is a crucial source of stimulus in the purchase of domestic goods, and advice from peer consumers about a product or service wields a superior impact than any other type of marketer-generated information (Alreck & Settle, 1995). The importance of word of mouth also known as word of mouse or electronic word of mouth (eWOM) in the online world has increased many folds than before to marketers, due to the emergence of social network sites. Electronic word of mouth offers explicit information, interactivity and

empathetic listening, but the "distance" between the source of communication and the receiver is much lower than distance in marketer induced communications. With such a big advantage being offered by social media, marketers have become quick to incorporate it in their media mix. India is no exception to this trend and has also been quick in embarking social media and recognizing its value addition capability.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to get a complete understanding of consumer engagement with social media, a literature scan was undertaken. To uphold the need of this study the gap in the previous studies were identified through the review of literature which is divided into following five sections.

2.1 Social Networking

Social networking and communication has changed significantly since the introduction of online social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace etc. (Lee & Conroy, 2005). Evolution of social networking been portrayed in figure-I in the form of timeline (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). The clutter of websites toward the end of 2007 portrays the increasing popularity of the online social network concept among general population and at the same time potential was identified in the field by many business houses and entrepreneurs. It all started with sixdegrees.com named after six degrees of separation concept in 1997 based on model of web of contacts. Six degrees of separation concept is based on the assumption that every person is away from other person on this earth by approximately six steps and a person can connect to any other person over six degrees through this site. Sixdegrees.com users were able to send messages up to six degrees over the site. This was the first demonstration of today's popular social networking concept. This site was closed in 2001 but again restated in 2010 to join the wave of social network boom. This was followed by LiveJournal and AsianAvenue social network sites in 1999 to LinkedIn and MySpace in 2003. The year 2005 was the year that saw the birth of

today's most popular social network site Facebook which commercialized from high school network for everyone in 2006.

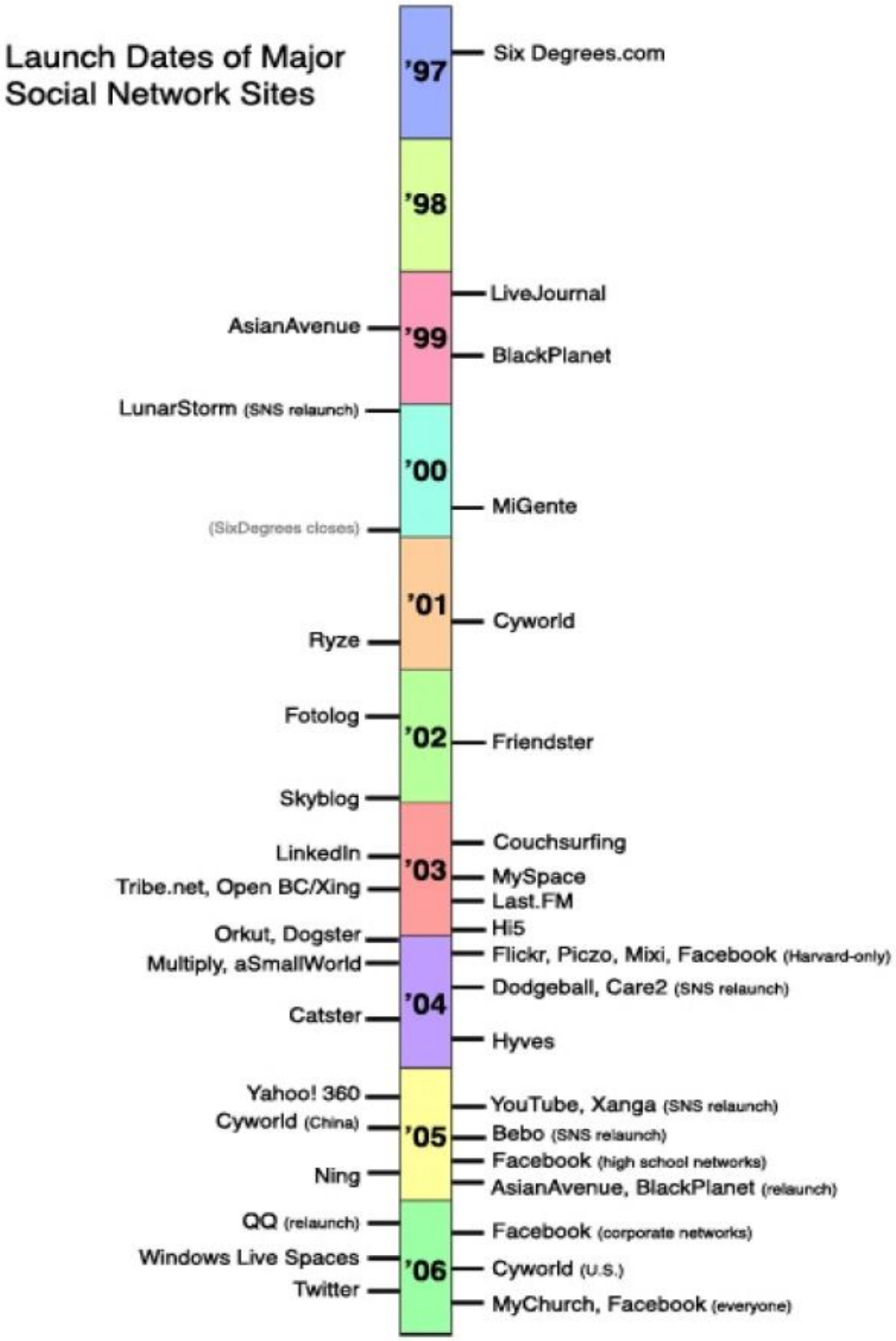

Figure I: Evolution of Social Network

Today, Facebook is having more than 500 million active users, out of which 250 million login at least once every day. On an average each person has 130 friends on this site and people spend over 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook and on an average every user is connected to 80 community's pages, groups and events. Facebook users only share more than 30 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photo albums, etc.) each month (Facebook, 2011). Facebook is only one social media site. As per the published statistics on E Consultancy blog Twitter has 175m user accounts, LinkedIn has 100m. By the start of 2011, average number of tweets per hour is over 4 million (Hird, 2011).

2.2 Social Networking and India

Social media is now ingrained in the way tech-savvy Indians live their lives. The popularity of social media is increasing day by day and so is its usage. As per a collaborated study (Nielsen, 2011) on Social Media usage conducted by two companies the Nielson and AbsolutData through an online survey on sample population of 2000 respondents spread across top five metros and tier-1 cities in India, use of social media is on boom in India with not only about 30 million Indians becoming members of social networking sites but also that these people are spending more and more time on these sites daily than on personal email. 20 per cent Indians spend between an hour and three hours on social network sites as compared to only 8 percent spending the same time on personal email. People in India are moving away from the traditional method of old one-to-one communication (email) to one-to-much communication i.e. social network sites. Participants in the virtual democracy i.e. social network are able to share experiences with their online community and satisfy their social needs. India is experiencing a boom in telecommunication sector. There has been an increase in number of mobile communication devices and it has been estimated that almost 45000 Indians will intend to join social network sites each day. The statistics related to India are very

promising. Activity on only one social network site Facebook is done by 42 per cent of mobile users and also Facebook has witnessed 1686 per cent increase in its share since April 2010. If the same pace is maintained then social network users in India are expected to pass 45 million mark by early 2012. This level of engagement on social network sites is a boon to marketers because it has led to an increase in the awareness level of brands on social media. And this shows the intent of Indians to communicate with brands over social network sites indicating that social media has the capacity to alter the traditional dynamics between brands and consumers who are time hungry and may find traditional forms of advertising obtrusive and unattractive. Social network sites have therefore become one of the multiple touch points for marketers to reach consumer to assist in purchase of product or service (Kannan, 2011).

Facebook and Orkut are two most commonly used social network sites in India with other details given below.

Table I: Social Network in India

Position	Social Network	Size(in Million)	Page Views
1	Orkut	18	65.1 Million
2	Facebook	17	3,945 Million
3	LinkedIn	8	72 Million
4	Ibibo	5	102 Million
5	Twitter	4.5	16.4 Million

Today Indian crowd, irrespective of various age groups, is using social networking sites to connect. Most of the Indians use social networking sites between 6pm to 10 pm i.e. after their regular working hours**.** Other trends that are noteworthy in the Indian context are that:

- Mumbai is the maximum traffic generating city on social network sites.
- The Maximum number of social network users belong to the age group of 15- 24 years.

- Of all the Indians present on social network sites, over 45% users return regularly.

2.3 Social media consumer engagement

Social media has gained prominance in the marketer's handbook, owing to the fact that it has so much to offer in terms of a large pool of users, platforms for communication, content sharing and a lot more. This has initiated a need among marketers to understand the nitty gritties of online user engagement, their patterns and the reasons behind such engagements, thereby making social media consumer engagement a vital area of study. Telstra- a telecommunication company embraces social media as an important tool of corporate and business engagement. Telstra encourages its employees to use social media in a way to reach out and share information and views with friends and communities – both old and new. Telstra appreciates the value in using social media to engage customers, communities and other relevant stakeholders. A few studies that have been carried out in this area can be cited as follows. Forrester Research Inc. (2007) defined engagement as the level of involvement, interaction, intimacy, and influence an individual has with a brand over time. Engagement goes beyond reach and frequency to measure people's real feelings about brands. As a customer's participation with a brand deepens from site use and purchases (involvement and interaction), the affinity and championing (intimacy and influence) also increases. The four parts of engagement build on each other to make a holistic picture. Consumer engagement in social media stands on two pillars: social strategy and technology. The aim of Consumer engagement is to generate value for both customer and company by extending brand/product experience throughout all phases of relationship: from need to loyalty (DigitalIngredients, 2009). Takahashi (2010) in an attempt to analyze about how Japnese youth engage with social network sites carried out a study on two of the social networking sites MySpace and Mixi. This study identified four dimensions of audience engagement namely information-seeking activity, connectivity, bricolage and participation. The results of the

study revealed that social engagement among Japanese youth is leading them to create or recreate themselves every day on social network sites.
Epsilon (2010) conducted a study in pharmaceutical sector to trace the customer engagement through social media in pharmaceutical Industry. The study indicated two groups of patient's first group with highly engaged patients who take an active role in their own health management and second group with individuals who lack the confidence to play an active role in their own health. The opportunity lies in recognizing these different groups and facilitating conversations that are tailored to each group's needs, which are very different.

2.4 Social network advertising

Services of social network sites model is based on providing completely free service to users and income for social network sites is generated by selling advertisements to precisely targeted individual and as well as selling of users statistical data collected from their site profiles (Barnes, 2006).

Richards & Curran (2002) defined advertising as "*a paid, mediated form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action, now or in the future which is conveyed to an audience through print, electronics or any method other than direct person-to-person contact*". In marketing mix, promotions are a very critical part and advertising is based on the simple Sender-Receiver communication model which resembles push marketing model as through advertising incentives to purchase are sent to consumers and if we consider integrated marketing communication model, advertising is crucial element belonging to customer focused marketing strategy with provision for customer feedback in a two-way communication process (Schultz, 2007).

Internet marketing has come a long way and new advents in the online social media marketing have taken it many steps further (Cory, 2010). The web 2.0 is all about two way interactions with the customer rather than one

way communication i.e. just informing your customers. Social media acts as a fusion of element of promotion mix. It enables organizations to directly talk to their customers and also allows for the direct interaction of the marketing organization with other organizations (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Social media has been identified as the one of the top three most suitable digital media for marketing to pest management professionals. If email and the web have benefited ones business, then with social media we are talking about next generation. For marketers social media is a tool which reaches to wider audience quickly with greater transparency, also leading to deeper relationships with existing customer and helps in expanding prospects network.

As per the study conducted by Psychster.com in collaboration with allrecepies.com for comparing user engagement across social media, seven types of advertisements have been identified (Psychster Inc., 2010). The seven types of social media advertisements are as follows:

1. Sponsored Content Advertisements
2. Newsletter
3. Banner
4. Corporate Profiles with Fans and Logos
5. Corporate Profiles without Fans and Logos
6. Get Widget
7. Give Widget

2.5 Brand personification

Brands are just more than a name or a logo to its users. How people perceive different brands is a very difficult task for nay marketer. Understanding about the perception of the brand by the users can be done using Brand Personification, which simply means if the brand were a person, what type of person would it be?

Brand personification tries to recast consumer's perception of the attributes of a product or service into a human like character (Schiffman &

Kanuk, 2007). Brand personification is a projective technique to describe the brand from customer's perspective i.e. what the brand is? But not what the brand should be?

A study conducted by (Marjorie, Edward, & Barbara, 2011) focuses on personification created through visual images in print advertising and found that this kind of personification can encourage consumers to anthropomorphize. This effect finally makes customers emotional response to the brand more probable. As per (Pandey, 2009) success of any brand in the market depends upon personality of the brand as perceived by the consumer.

2.6 Social Networking and electronic word of mouth

Social media is different from traditional media because of its model of consumer to consumer networking. Online C2C communication channels through social network sites allow messages to be spread in word of mouth fashion i.e. quickly. With increasing number of marketers using internet for marketing their products and services has led to communication clutter in the online world. Social network sites provide the ability to marketers to move away from the clutter by electronic word of mouth marketing. In virtual democracy i.e. in online social world consumers create virtual communities to communicate with likeminded people (Goldenberg, Barak, & Muller, 2001).

In present times advertisers have the opportunity to use electronic word of mouth to enhance persuasiveness of their messages. Electronic word of mouth media also acts as more credible over the order old school media (Jung & Windels, 2008). In a study conducted to trace the effectiveness of electronic word of mouth as compared to traditional marketing vehicles found electronic word of mouth to be more effective source of communication (Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels, 2009). In another study conducted among 2000 respondents to find the motivation behind using electronic word of mouth for C2C communication platforms, a typology for motives of consumer online communication have been identified. These

motives include consumers' desire for social interaction, desire for economic incentives, their concern for other consumers, and the potential to enhance their own self-worth (Fred, Kelvin, Gainfranco, & Dwayne, 2004). A recurring theme in electronic word of mouth is group cohesion-strong versus weak ties (Goldenberg, Barak, & Muller, 2001). When the tie strength is weak then network structures (design elements, navigability); are essential to build trust and consumer interaction with websites. Communications in a social network sites augments a user's susceptibility to the opinions of fellow members (Kozinets, 1999). Group cohesion (strong/weak ties), relational motivations (trust, social norms) and network structures (design elements, navigability) provide means of generating effective electronic word of mouth. Information disseminated through electronic word of mouth has a far reaching quality and variety which can't be provided through any commercial message. User via electronic word of mouth discuss a product or service on the basis of their multiple experiences from multiple perspectives including price, features or any kind of potential benefits or problems.

In a primary study conducted (Chu & Kim, 2011) to develop a framework in understanding consumers' use of SNSs as a vehicle for electronic word of mouth found that user's electronic word of mouth behavior in virtual space can help marketers to identify opinion leaders. electronic word of mouth on social network sites can be of three types opinion seeking, opinion giving and opinion passing. Further Chu & Kim (2011) identified tie strength, homophily, trust and two types of internormative influence and informational influence as the key determinants of electronic word of mouth on Social network sites. Electronic word of mouth through social network sites has been identified as a necessary element in promotion mix helping integrated marketing communication marketers to develop effective communications.

2.7 Social Networks and value creation

Value is the satisfaction derived by the person from using a product or a service. Value is the amount of benefit that is derived from a service or

product relative to its cost. If customer don't perceive value in the product or service then it is not valuable. Value is important for both potential as well as existing customer, who continually searches for it. Whenever any transaction is commenced in commercial world, along arises the perception of value which plays a very heavy role in customer delight (Gitomer, 2007). Considering the need of changing times marketers have moved from traditional marketing models to contemporary marketing models online. This leads to a dire need of identifying how value is created or augmented in these new online marketing models i.e. social network sites (TNS, TRU & Marketing evolution, 2007). In traditional marketing model marketing information in form of advertising is forwarded towards potential audience. Among these potential audiences a certain number of audiences become aware and in certain way for these audiences touched by advertisements, value is created. But in the new era of social network marketing the advertisement message don't stop with the marketer communicating the message to customers but the message still keeps in moving among customer. The big question which emerges: Does this leads to enhanced value for the customers? In social network where interaction is an impression, the value generation needs to evaluated very carefully.

From all the literature review we can easily trace the increasing importance of social network sites for marketers due to the presence of large number of population over social network sites. Before doing on any kind of marketing activity markers need to understand the usage patterns of SNS along with the understanding of factors that motivate users to use SNS. Moreover the literature review also doesn't provide clear understanding about the role of brand personification in building users perception about social network sites. The impact of social network sites on value creation process for brands is also an area to explore.

On literature review it can be summarized that almost all studies have unanimously agreed to the importance of social media in reaching the consumers. But in contrast very few studies have tried to empirically verify the customer engagement with social media.

3. NEED OF THE STUDY

Internet usage in India is increasing at a rapid pace. In 2010 India had 1,173,108,018 (1.1 billion) population with 88,000,000 (88 million) active Internet users making 8.5% penetration rate. 97% of these active users have been regular users of internet and 85% among Internet users belong to 19-45 age group. 60% of the active internet users use internet mainly for the purpose of social networking out of which 60% of the traffic comes from non-metro cities (Mankani, 2010). The penetration of internet is highest in Punjab i.e.11% as compared to 8.5% India penetration rate (Khanna, Aircel Enters Punjab, 2010). In Facebook 91% of the users are in the age bracket of 16-44 (Social Bakers, 2011). Orkut is the largely used social networking site with 18 million registered users followed by Facebook with 17 million registered users. But when it comes to number of page view Facebook is having 3,945 million views as compared to 65.1 million views. After Orkut and Facebook the most used social networking sites in India are LinkedIn with 8 million, Ibibo with 5 million and Twitter with 4.5 million registered users (Shah, Social Media in India: Statistics & Insights, 2011).

Considering the above give facts one can trace the increasing importance of internet marketing and social network marketing presently and in times to come. As per the 2011 social media marketing industry report, a significant 90% of marketers indicate that social media is important for their business (Stelzner, 2011).

Escalations in social networking and collaborative advertising technology have led to a variety of new options for advertisers. With the expansion of this medium, choosing the right type of advertisement for targeting potential consumers is not an easy task. Companies need to identify the various types of consumer segments present on the social network and kind of relationship the potential consumer is having with the network site.
Borrowing from past literature, it is summarized that the usage rate of social media is increasing both by consumers as well as marketers. But in

contrast not many studies have focused upon studying the usage pattern, factors motivating usage, brand personification, electronic word of mouth etc. Keeping this gap in mind the present study intends to fill this gap and add to the body of knowledge in management education. The finding of the study will be of the interest to all firms which plan to or already are using social media to reach their consumers.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

(a) To study the usage pattern of social networking sites among the social networkers across cross-sections of the population.

(b) To identify the factors that motivates usage of Social Networking Sites.

(c) To study the role of Brand Personification in building perception about the social networking sites.

(d) To study the value creation process for brands through social networking sites w.r.t momentum effect leading to increase in advocacy and loyalty.

(e) To study the association between social relationships and eWOM (Electronic word of mouth) in Social Networking Sites.

(f) To compare user engagement across social network advertisement types.

5. HYPOTHESIS

$H_0$1 : There is no significant difference in usage pattern of social media among the social networkers across cross section of the population.

$H_0$2(a) : There is no significant relationship between momentum effect and advocacy

$H_0$2(b) : There is no significant relationship between momentum effect and loyalty.

$H_0$3 : There is no significant relationship between social relationships and eWOM

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The proposed study is a two phased study that will start with exploratory qualitative research using focus group to find what motivates social-networking usage and will be followed by extensive quantitative online study.

6.1 Sources of Data:

The proposed study makes use of both secondary and primary data. *Secondary Data* is essential in order to get complete understanding of social media. Efforts will be made to collect secondary data from all possible sources that directly or indirectly focus on the theme. Secondary data will help in identification of all relevant dimensions of construct under study and in the design of the instrument, which will be administered on the respondents to collect relevant data.

Primary Data which is of immense importance and backbone to the study will be obtained from respondents with the help of widely used and well know survey method utilizing fully structured questionnaire. Apart from the questionnaire focus group will also be used to get insights into consumers behavior related to social media.

6.2 Sample:

A total of 1000 social networkers from Punjab[1] in the age bracket of 16 to 45[2] will be the respondents. Since the study is on social networking the sampling frame for the sample is an account with any of the four Social Networking Sites chosen for the study. The top four Social Networking Sites on the bases of number of users have been chosen for the study[3]. The sampling unit in the study is an individual who is having an account with social networking sites. Apart from this there will be no limitations as to who could take the survey. Stratified sampling technique will be used

[1] Khanna (2010)
[2] Shah (2011)
[3] Social Bakers (2011)

and allocation in each stratum will be done in proportion to the number of the registered users on the Social Networking Site.

6.3 Research Instrument:

Well tested data gathering tool questionnaire will be utilized to collect primary data in survey. Items in the structured questionnaire will be phrased based upon the review of literature and the findings of the focus group conducted. The tool will be standardized after checking the items for validity and reliability. The questionnaire will first be tested for face and content validity within the academic group of fellow researchers and faculty. The modified questionnaire will be tested through a pilot survey involving respondents in the proposed sampling frame. The questionnaire will then be administered to the study subject.

6.4 Data Analysis:

Krueger (1994) framework will be utilized for qualitative analysis of focus groups. This frame work helps to manage the large amount and complex nature of qualitative data much more easily. Statistical computer package will be utilized for quantitative analysis of the data, in which relevant techniques like Multi-Dimensional Scaling, factor analysis, Anova, Chi square test etc. will be utilized to derive inferences from the raw data.

7. TENTATIVE CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: Review of Literature, need, scope and research methodology
Chapter 3: Motivation to use social media and the usage pattern
Chapter 4: Brand personification and Value creation
Chapter 5: Social relationships and e-WOM
Chapter 6: Social media advertisement types and user engagement
Chapter 7: Conclusions and recommendations
Bibliography
Annexures

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